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Municipal Charters. A Discussion of the Essentials of a City Charter with Forms or Models for Adoption. By NATHAN MATTHEWS. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1914.—vii, 210 pp.

One does not have to agree with ex-Mayor Matthews' views regarding principles of city government in order to recognize the extraordinary value of this volume to students and teachers of the subject, as well as to city officials, charter committees and others engaged in the hand to hand struggle with the difficult daily problems of municipal administration. It is to the latter, however, that the book, in truth, is addressed, and to them especially the author's thirty years' first-hand experience in the government of Boston raises a presumption in favor of his right to speak with authority in this field. The purpose of the work is to present a draft of a model charter with an exposition of the principles underlying it. In the plan the discussion of essentials becomes part i (pages 3-93). Parts ii and iii, making up the greater bulk of the volume (pages 97-210), include the charter and explanatory notes thereon. The experience of other states and cities has been used; nevertheless the model charter has been drawn with the Massachusetts laws and Boston governmental history in mind, the references being to Massachusetts statutes and Boston public reports. The charter is intended for cities of 100,000, but a necessarily incomplete examination seems to justify the author's belief that with slight modifications it may "serve as a model for legislation in any state respecting cities of any size."

Not the least admirable feature of the work is the dispassionate manner in which the author, while insisting on his own beliefs, presents all shades of opinion on disputed points. This attitude is maintained even in the draft charter which includes alternative provisions embodying conflicting views on some matters. Needless to say, the absence of bias has served the more to add force and conviction to the author's own conclusions, some of which may briefly be presented here.

Mr. Matthews believes that the ordinary problems of government are so similar in all cities of the United States that we may establish certain general principles which will be universally applicable. For this reason he thinks uniformity is not only possible but desirable, from which it follows that "home rule" seems unimportant to him. Indeed he finds "nothing in the experience of Missouri and California with the so-called freeholder charters to justify the policy," and holds that "the arguments advanced in support of this idea generally rest either on ignorance of town and city history in this country, or on a child-

like faith in the value of the phrase" (page 34). The state, therefore, not only should impose by law upon the city sound methods of administration but also should directly supervise and control the local authorities with respect to loans, civil service, public investigations, the regulation of public service companies, and the management of municipal business enterprises.

The type of organization which in the author's mind meets the requirements of his principles is "the responsible executive type" as distinguished from the "commission" and the "city council committee" types. The latter is found un-American in origin and unsuited to our conditions. The commission form is not preferred because it divides responsibility; nevertheless its value as an improvement over the council type is recognized, and the draft charter is accompanied by suggestions for modifications (pages 164-174) to adapt it to this popular form. Enthusiasts for the city-manager plan will regret that their pet project is dismissed in a brief footnote as merely a development of the commission form. The draft plan provides for an elected mayor who appoints all administrative officers and takes entire responsibility for the conduct of administration subject to checks by certain state boards in matters legitimately within the sphere of state influence and, in all other matters, by a small unicameral council elected at large for long terms, part retiring after shorter periods. The budget is to be prepared in the mayor's office and submitted to the council, which may not increase the items nor add to them.

As to franchise grants the indeterminable form is advocated, since on the author's showing any other form is adverse to the public interests. Franchises are to be granted by state legislatures subject to assent by local councils in such matters as location on particular streets. Regulation of rates and service is to be entrusted to a state board. The chapter on management of municipal commercial enterprises is startling in some of its assertions, e. g., "There are probably not more than two or three municipal gas or electric light plants in the country which would not be shown, upon a proper analysis of their financial management, to be operated at a loss, or by means of loans increasing faster than the value of the works" (page 83). But this is no condemnation of the policy; proper accounting will, in the view of the author, reveal the reasons for loss and point the way to improvements whose accomplishment is a comparatively easy task.

Little is found to praise in many of the newer instruments of democracy. The direct primary is out of place in city government because there is no need for political parties in cities, and non-partisan

elections require no previous elections to determine candidates, for they may "qualify by merely filing nomination papers." Even if this should result in the election of minority candidates the author hesitates to recommend preferential voting. The initiative and recall are condemned, as is also the referendum, except for deciding certain questions of finance, municipal ownership, and so on.

Throughout the work runs a current of distrust of the tendency to imitate foreign institutions. So far as this attitude does not result in sheer provincialism it may be commended; it is at least a welcome relief from the chorus of adulation which American observers of foreign municipal institutions have been raising.

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Progressive Democracy. By HERBERT CROLY. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1914.—438 pp.

In this volume the author of *The Promise of American Life* has contributed another thoughtful study of the American political system. Mr. Croly has the unusual advantage of being a student-spectator of the phenomena which he describes; and for this reason his work is characterized by fairness, poise, keenness of observation and sympathy with progressive ideas.

In the author's view, the great problem of the present is to find some way of altering the political physiognomy of the American people, who, weary and heavy-laden with the legalism of the eighteenth century, are seeking to break the "power of the word," as he calls the federal constitution. Mr. Croly has no quarrel with the past. He warmly admires the "monarchy of the Constitution" for having instructed the American people during their "collective childhood" and for having established a government which was at once authoritative, national and educational. But he becomes impatient with the present upholders of the past who, for selfish reasons, wish to perpetuate an alliance between "an overgrown business system with a superannuated political system."

Since the Civil War, a great deal of uneasiness began to manifest itself among large sections of the American people because of the growing influence of corporate capital on the political life of the nation. Radicalism was at first sporadic and morally indignant at this or that "abuse" which it wished to abolish in order to restore the pristine purity of the Fathers. It finally began to dawn on the minds of the more thoughtful that perhaps all was not well with the political structure established by the Constitution, so long praised as the mirror of polit-